

7-3-2015

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Trennis Henderson
Ouachita Baptist University

Ouachita News Bureau
Ouachita Baptist University

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Recommended Citation

Henderson, Trennis and News Bureau, Ouachita, "Buddy Sutton, longtime Ouachita trustee chairman, remembered for life of service" (2015). *Press Releases*. Paper 141.
http://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/press_releases/141

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OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



NEWS

For immediate release
July 3, 2015

For more information, contact the OBU News Bureau at 870-245-5206

Buddy Sutton, longtime Ouachita trustee chairman, remembered for life of service

By Trennis Henderson, OBU Vice President for Communications

LITTLE ROCK, Ark.—William H. “Buddy” Sutton, who served 10 years as chairman of Ouachita Baptist University’s Board of Trustees, died July 2 at age 84.

Sutton, a prominent Little Rock attorney, was a longtime friend and benefactor of Ouachita. University trustees named the W.H. Sutton School of Social Sciences in his honor in 2008. Ouachita President Rex Horne described Sutton at the time as “a rare individual who brings a blessing to whatever he touches.”

Dr. Randall Wight, dean of the Sutton School of Social Sciences, affirmed that Sutton’s “wisdom, kindness and inspiration will be missed. May God continue to bless all the work of his heart and hands.”

Expressing appreciation for Sutton’s lifelong example of professionalism, integrity and service, Wight said the Sutton School is a lasting tribute to Sutton’s legacy for the benefit of current and future students.

Sutton, who was born in Hope, Ark., in 1931, holds three degrees from the University of Arkansas: both a Bachelor of Science and a Bachelor of Arts conferred in 1953 and a Juris Doctor degree conferred in 1959. He also was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree by Ouachita in 1993.

Sutton’s distinguished law career with the Arkansas firm of Friday, Eldredge & Clark stretched more than 45 years, including 11 years as managing partner. During that time, he was honored with the Arkansas Bar Association’s Outstanding Trial Lawyer Award and served as president of the Pulaski County Bar Association.

Also known as a dedicated churchman, Sutton served for decades as a deacon and Sunday School teacher at Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock. His extensive leadership roles included chairing the 1989 Little Rock Billy Graham Crusade as well as being elected president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention in 1991 and 1992, the first layman to hold that position in more than 50 years.

Active in community service, he chaired the Arkansas Sports Hall of Fame Foundation and the Baptist Health Board of Directors and was named Arkansan of the Year by Easter Seals.

Sutton and his first wife, Peggy Pentecost Sutton, were married for 52 years until her death in 2004. He married Susan Overton Sutton in 2010 who survives. He also is survived by three children, Rebecca Sutton Kirkpatrick, Richard Sutton and Wesley Sutton; one stepson, William Ford Overton; four grandchildren; five great grandchildren; and six step grandchildren.

Visitation will be held Sunday, July 5, from 2 to 4 p.m. at Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock. A memorial service will be held Monday, July 6, at 3 p.m., also at Immanuel. Memorial gifts may be made to Ouachita Baptist University, Immanuel Baptist Church or Baptist Health Medical Center.